

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 126  
By Miller

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Senator Steve Southerland on the celebration of his 50th birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to those of our colleagues who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Senator Steve Southerland will celebrate his 50th birthday on March 8, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, Steve Southerland was born March 8, 1955 in Morristown, where he graduated from Morristown East High School and attended Walters State Community College; a mortgage broker, he is an active member of Buffalo Trail Baptist Church and is a Rotarian; and

WHEREAS, a highly respected member of the Morristown community, Senator Southerland is a former chairman of the Hamblen County Republican Party and a member of the Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, Steve Southerland's demeanor is characterized by his willing helpfulness, a soft spoken manner, and the imposing physical presence of a "gentle giant," all features which endear him to the members of this body, the legislative staff, and obviously to his constituency; and

WHEREAS, making one of his better decisions, Steve was joined in marriage with Cheri Officer in 1994 and the Southerlands are the parents of a daughter, Mattea; all in all, Senator Southerland appears to be an upstanding, conventional, and hard-working East Tennessee businessman, family man and law maker; **but**

WHEREAS, things are not always as they appear on the surface; conventional and staid first appearances sometime conceal strange alter egos with undreamt-of personality quirks and idiosyncrasies; and

WHEREAS, who knew that Senator Southerland is a hopeless romantic who utterly charmed his dates by inviting them along to fish a trotline; though he did successfully woo Cheri, he jeopardized their relationship by placing her stuffed animal that closely resembled her live pet rabbit in the yard and proclaiming that the pet had got loose. She was not amused; and

WHEREAS, a pet lover himself, Steve has a dog named "Killer" which he identifies as an Italian Terrier because of Killer's love of lasagna; one day when a girl scout came to the front door, the dog got out and in an attempt to bring the animal to heel, Senator Southerland shouted "Killer! Killer!" The terrified young lass, perhaps thinking herself transported to the storyline of the *Hound of the Baskervilles*, interpreted the scene as a large, crazed man exhorting his fierce canine to "Kill her! Kill her!"; and

WHEREAS, his eagerness to please was dramatically demonstrated at one of his first jobs, working for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, where Steve offered to help break up a big rock with a sledgehammer; perhaps thinking of John Henry's mighty contest with the steam drill, he took a powerful swing with the hammer, which unfortunately missed the rock, passed between his legs and arced over to the head of a co-worker, who luckily was only knocked unconscious; and

WHEREAS, a possible "outlaw" facet of Senator Southerland's personality surfaces when he rides his Harley Davidson clad in leather; it is not known if he carries a sawed-off pool cue on those occasions; and

WHEREAS, as Steve Southerland approaches his sixth decade, he is still an active and productive member of society, making laws and participating in various civic and community events, as his health and his bifurcated personality permit; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize a beloved colleague and one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Senator Steve Southerland on the celebration of his 50th birthday, express our hope that his legendary sweet tooth is fully satiated with much ice cream and other goodies, and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we issue this cautionary advice: As you next look into the open countenance of our esteemed colleague and beloved friend, reflect upon this chilling thought – which Steve Southerland is gazing back at you through those guileless eyes?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.